

Message Text

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20

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SAB-01 EB-11 OMB-01 IO-14

SAM-01 EUR-25 AF-10 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /159 W

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Z 060956Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN FLASH

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2573

AMMAN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, US, IS, SY

SUBJ: ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: TEL AVIV 2510 AND 2549

SUMMARY: ISRAELI POLITICIANS FACE MAJOR DECISIONS IN COMING DAYS WHICH WILL DETERMINE WHETHER RABIN CAN FORM NEW GOVERNMENT OR WHETHER CURRENT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE IN OFFICE UNTIL NEW ELECTION. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE MAY 6 THAT, DUE TO INABILITY TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING RELIGIOUS ISSUES, IT CANNOT JOIN NEW GOVERNMENT. ON PAST EXPERIENCE, THIS MAY NOT BE FINAL NRP POSITION. LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO CONVENE MAY 12 AND PRESUMABLY WILL BE ASKED TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF FORMING NEW 61-MEMBER COALITION WHICH, ASSUMING NO CHANGE IN NRP POSITION, WOULD INCLUDE INDEPENDENT LIBERALS AND CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

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OUTLOOK IS UNCERTAIN, AS RABIN FACES OPPOSITION WITHIN LABOR

PARTY FROM RAFI ELEMENTS OPPOSING DOVISH FOREIGN POLICY AND FROM MAPAI ELEMENTS FAVORING CONTINUATION CARETAKER GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. DESPITE PREOCCUPATION WITH SECRETARY'S VISIT, NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMATION OF NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT ENTER HIGH GEAR THIS WEEK, WITH NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) DECISION EXPECTED MAY 6 ON WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO RE-FORM COALITION WITH LABLR ALIGNMENT. AT PRESENT, IT APPEARS THAT NRP ANSWER WILL BE NEGATIVE SINCE SO FAR NO NEW COMPROMISE LANGUAGE HAS BEEN FOUND ON CONTROVERSIAL WHO IS A JEW ISSUE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. CHIEF RABBI GOREN APPARENTLY HAS BECOME NRP'S DE FACTO NEGOTIATOR ON WHO IS A JEW ISSUE, LEADING JERUSALEM POST TO ASK SARCASTICALLY, "WHO MADE HIM PREMIER?" EVEN THOUGH NRP IS EXPECTED TO INDICATE ITS INABILITY TO JOIN NEW GOVERNMENT, THIS POSITION MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE FINAL, AND NRP MAY YET ATTEMPT SOME LAST-MINUTE MANEUVER TO PROTECT ITS STATUS AS COALITION PARTNER IF IT APPEARS LATER THIS WEEK THAT RABIN STANDS GOOD CHANCE OF FORMING GOVERNMENT WITHOUT IT.

2. LABOR ALIGNMENT NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL MEET MAY 7 TO DISCUSS ITS STRATEGY, AND ASSUMING NEGATIVE NRP RESPONSE TODAY, CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROPOSE THAT INDEPENDENT LIBERALS (ILP) AND CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT (CRM) BE INVITED TO FORM 61-MEMBER GOVERNMENT. LABOR PARTY HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO CONVENE ITS CENTRAL COMMITTEE MAY 12 TO VOTE ON FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE HEARD FROM ONE SOURCE THAT RABIN PLANS TO GO TO PRESIDENT KATZIR MAY 9 WITH ANNOUNCEMENT RE FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT IN PRINCIPLE, BUT WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT RABIN CAN TAKE THIS STEP BEFORE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETS.

3. MAIN OBSTACLE TO FORMATION OF 61-MEMBER GOVERNMENT IS OPPOSITION OF ELEMENTS WITHIN RAFI FACTION OF LABOR PARTY WHICH BELIEVE THAT SUCH GOVERNMENT WILL BE TOO DOVISH IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION, WITH AUGMENTED INFLUENCE OF INDEPENDENT LIBERALS AND MAPAM. RAFI VOTE WITHIN CENTRAL COMMITTEE DOUBTLESS WILL BE INFLUENCED BY RECOMMENDATIONS OF PERES, WHO IS EMERGING AS SUCCESSOR TO DAYAN FOR LEADERSHIP OF FACTION, AND ESPECIALLY BY INFORMAL INDICATIONS RE PLANS FOR CABINET

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COMPOSITION. RAFI WILL USE WHATEVER LEVERAGE IS AVAILABLE TO IT TO ASSURE THAT MORE HARDLINE PERSONALITIES ALSO BE INCLUDED IN RABIN CABINET. RABIN ALSO WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THOSE FORCES WITHIN LABOR PARTY WHO PREFER ONGOING CARETAKER GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE UNTIL NEW ELECTION. IN ADDITION TO MRS MEIR HERSELF, DAYAN, GALILI EBAN AND OTHERS PROBABLY ARE UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT NEW RABIN GOVERNMENT IN WHICH WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF EBAN THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE. DEGREE TO WHICH

THEY MAY TRY TO OBSTRUCT ITS FORMATION WILL
BE IPORTANT ELEMENT IN DELIBERATIONS WHICH LIE
AHEAD, AND THIS INCIPIENT OPPOSITION (LARGELY FROM WITHIN MAPAI
FACTION ITSELF OF LABOR PARTY) MAY HOLD THE BALANCE.

4. LABOR PARTY ACTIVISTS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN IN RECENT
DAYS HAVE TOLD US THAT, DESPITE THESE OBSTACLES, THEY
BELIEVE ON BALANCE THAT RABIN WILL SUCCEED IN PUTTING TOGETHER
NEW GOVERNMENT. ONE LABOR PARTY KNESSET MEMBER HAS
SUGGESTED TO US THAT RABIN PROBABLY WOULD TRY
TO DEFER ANY DECISION REGARDING NEW ELECTION UNTIL END OF
YEAR, POSTPONING ACTUAL HOLDING OF ELECTION UNTIL EARLY 1975 OR
LATER. OTHERS HAVE ESTIMATED RABIN MAY HAVE TO MAKE FIRM
COMMITMENT NOW FOR EARLY ELECTION IN ORDER TO GET SUPPORT. AS
REGARDS RABIN'S MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF BUILDING STRENGTH
AND ANSWERING THOSE WHO HAVE QUESTIONED HIS EMOTIONAL BALANCE
IN MAY 1967 AND LATELY HAVE RAISED ISSUE OF HONORARIA FOR
LECTURES GIVEN WHILE SERVING AS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, THIS
MORNING'S PRESS SUGGESTS THAT LATTER STORM HAS DIED DOWN. RABIN
HAS EXPLAINED THAT ACCEPTANCE OF FEES WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
FOREIGN MINISTRY REGULATIONS (AND PREVIOUS ISRAELI EMBASSY
PRACTICE).

5. COMMENT. GIVEN DIFFICULTIES WHICH RABIN MUST OVERCOME,
PARTICULARLY WITHIN LABOR PARTY, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS FAR
FROM GUARANTEED THAT HE WILL ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT
AT THIS TIME, AND POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CARETAKER
GOVERNMENT FOR SEVERAL MORE MONTHS CERTAINLY CANNOT YET
BE RULED OUT.
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